

Major Crofoot, The Promoter

The Great American Deadbeat Meets
a Humorist and Is Greatly
Humiliated.

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MAJOR CROFOOT, grand promoter and artful dodger, was seated at his desk and chewing a bit of blotting pad, while he wondered where his lunch for that day was coming from, when his office door opened and a middle aged man entered with a smile on his face. The major at once jumped to the conclusion that it was somebody to invest in his scheme to raise sugar beets on the great Sahara desert, and he rose up and extended his hand and said:

"Good morning to you, sir. Pleasant morning. What can I do for you?"

"Yes, it is a pleasant morning. Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the caller as he helped himself to a chair.

"You—wanted to see me on business, I presume?"

"Yes, on business. Ha! ha! ha!"

"You perhaps want to make an investment?" continued the major, looking



MADE HIS HEELS KNOCK OVER THE STOVE AS HE SWUNG AROUND.

ing more closely to see if the man had the fires of insanity in his eyes.

"Perhaps I do. Ha! ha! ha! Say, this is a good one."

"You must excuse me, sir, if I fail to catch on."

"Oh, the catching on is easy enough. Don't you remember me, major?"

"I am sorry to say that I do not. Have you ever invested with me?"

"Have I? Have I? Ha, ha, ha! That is a good one."

"My time is very much occupied, sir."

"Yes, I know. That's another good one. Excuse me, major, while I gurgie."

He gurgled and chuckled and slapped his leg for half a minute, while the major studied his features. All of a sudden his identity was revealed.

"So you remember me?" asked the man as he saw the trouble in the major's face. "Yes, I am Green. We used to room and board in the same house. Yes—ha, ha, ha!"

"So this is Green," queried the promoter as he held out his hand—"the dear old friend of other days? How on earth could I have failed to establish your identity at once? You will excuse me, I know. By George, but I was thinking of you the moment you entered."

"Not a doubt of it, major—not a doubt. Funny, isn't it? Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear old bilious boy, I am glad to see you—three glad—and especially in such spirits. The last time I heard of you they said you had gone to Mexico and would never return."

"Did they? Ha, ha, ha! Say, that is funny; that is funny!"

And Mr. Green threw himself back in his chair with such force as to carry away its back. He laughed for a full minute, and there were tears in his eyes as he finally straightened up and said:

"You are the same dear old dead-beat and liar, and you ought to have a medal. How many swindles have you got on hand just now? You don't look as prosperous as you might, major, but I suppose you make a few victims. When you finally recognized me your face became as white as death, and you tried your best to swallow your Adam's apple. This is as good as reading a funny book."

"Mr. Green," began the major, trying to look very serious, "I was not always a millionaire."

"No? Ha, ha, ha! Keep it up, major!"

"There was a time, and that not far distant, when I lacked the wherewithal to buy a meal. I had hope and ambition and determination, but no money. One day you came to me and offered me a loan of \$5. Never in my life!"

"I came to you? I offered you a loan of \$5? Say, major, laugh with me—ha! ha! ha!"

"Never in my life shall I forget your unexpected kindness. You knew nothing about me, but you saw honesty and integrity in my looks, and something must have told you that I would succeed at last. You offered me \$5 and I accepted it in the spirit of a beggar. That sum laid the foundations of my fortune. All I have I owe to you, and I am free to say so."

"All you have?" shouted Mr. Green as he looked around at the office furniture. "Say, major, you grow funnier every minute. You will next be offering

me to repay me."

"Had I known where to reach you the loan would have been repaid years ago. As it is, I shall not content myself with handing you a check for the amount. Mr. Green, have you ever heard of the Great American Interchangeable Pie company?"

Mr. Green stood up and laughed. Then he leaned against the wall and laughed. Then he sat down and sniggered.

"Our object is to make the American pie known to the civilized world—known and appreciated. No other nation ever built itself up on pie. It is the pie, sir—the American pie—that rules the world. My company proposes to make them by the billion and ship them to every inhabited spot on the globe. From the 1st of October to the 1st of March of every year we shall make mince pies only. Forty-eight ingredients and two crusts in every pie, our trademark plainly stamped on the upper crust, and all persons counterfeiting it will be arrested at once. Every pie sent to its destination in its own wooden dish, and 10 cents will buy one in Persia as well as in Chicago. One price to all, and nothing like 'em. We have already secured hundreds of testimonials."

"Say, now—say, now—ha! ha! ha!" roared Mr. Green as he laughed till he was red in the face.

"From March 1 to Oct. 1," continued the major, without turning a hair, "we shall send out custard, peach, cherry and lemon pies. The price will be the same, and they will give the same satisfaction. The capital is \$3,000,000, all paid in, and the stock is already selling above par. Biggest, grandest, richest thing on the face of the earth. The dividends will reach 100 per cent in the first six months. Don't touch Standard Oil—don't fool with the beef trust. Come into the Great American Interchangeable Pie company. That is!"

"That is, you want me for vice president at a salary of \$25,000 per year?" interrupted Mr. Green.

"You have struck it exactly. Several years ago you loaned me \$5. It was bread cast upon the waters. I want it to return a hundredfold to you. I want you to know and fully realize that the sentiment of gratitude still beats in the human breast. Accept the place, my dear old friend—accept it and let me shake your hand in congratulation."

"Are you through, major?" was asked.

"Well, you can tell me what you will do. If you have a better thing on hand, why, I have nothing to say, but you know I would like to have you with me."

Mr. Green smiled. Then he grinned. Then he chuckled. Then he roared and slapped his leg.

"And the dividends can't be less than 100 per cent after the first six months," solemnly asserted the major, who was a good deal troubled in his mind.

"You slick deadbeat! You noble old liar! You beneficent old baldheaded son of a gun!"

"I do not understand you, sir."

Then Mr. Green rose up with a smile on his face and reached out for the major and made his heels knock over the stove as he swung him around.

The second swing cleared the desk, and the third raked the plaster all along one wall. Then the major was stood on his head, stood on his feet, danced up and down and played pitch and toss with, and when he was finally left lying on the dusty floor Mr. Green passed out of the office with a "Ta ta, major. The Great American Interchangeable Deadbeat company wishes you a fond good day!"

The major got up after a few minutes and brushed the dust off and sat down and hummed merrily to himself. He had lost everything but honor, but that was as safe as the rock of Gibraltar.

M. QUAD.

A Neighbor's Wish.

Mrs. F.—I am quite a near neighbor of yours now. I have taken a house by the river.

Mrs. S.—Oh, I do hope you will drop in some day.—Lippincott's Magazine.

Scare Head?

Spacer—I have been trying to think of a unique caption for the column of wedding announcements.

Editor—Head it "Rumors of War."—Judge.

She Didn't Know It Was Jack Kissing Her

HEAR no sound. Can it be that she is not here?

As I came into the hall I did not hear the rustle of a skirt. But the maid said she was downstairs. Why does she not come out to greet me?

I will enter the drawing room. Ah, the light is quite dim. Now I can see better, as my eyes grow accustomed to it.

What is that on the couch? It is she.

Sh! She sleeps. I will walk over and look at her.

How beautiful she is! Her cheeks are slightly flushed. Her hair! Heaven! I never knew she had such hair before.

She must have dropped down there and fallen asleep. Shall I awaken her?

I always knew that she was a pretty girl, but somehow I never realized how beautiful she was before.

My heart is going like a trip hammer. We are alone. I must kiss her. I cannot help myself.

Now I am leaning over—closer, closer. It is wrong of me? Well, I will answer for it if it is. There is no time now to argue. I love her, and I must have that kiss.

There! I did it. It was the finest kiss I ever took. I faint with bliss.

She still sleeps. Thank heaven! I can take another.

Here goes! On her lips this time. How soundly she sleeps! That last me was a hummer! It should surely have waked her. Can anything be wrong?

Once more! And again! And again! What! Not awake yet?

"Darling, speak to me! It is I—Jack. Why did you sleep so soundly?"

"Oh, Jack, I was not asleep, and I didn't know it was you."—Tom Mason in Lippincott's Magazine.

Discouraged.

"I'm downright discouraged," said the man who always looks on the dark side of life. "That's what I am—downright discouraged."

"What's the trouble?"

"Every summer that I can remember has produced a day that broke all previous records for heat."

"What of it?"

"Well, figure it out for yourself. Suppose it keeps up the pace for five or six years more?"—Washington Star.

The Sweet Girl Graduate.

With sparkling eyes and winsome smile. A confidence in knowledge great—Diploma, too, with ribbon pink—We welcome you, sweet graduate!

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In years to come, when love has won And knowledge finds it has no mate, 'Tis then the world will sing for joy And love will reign, sweet graduate!—Judge

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"That is soon told," William said, the old Quaker, solemnly. "It was because I was not at all pleased as my wife was."

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